



11 Debriefing

Focus Questions:

- Why is data debriefed?
- What are the steps of the debriefing process?
- Where are data corrections made?
- When is trip data submitted?

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I. Introduction

Data collected by West Coast Groundfish Observers is vital to the successful management of many fisheries off Washington, Oregon, and California. In order to ensure that data are consistently collected according to program guidelines observers are required to go through a debriefing process every two months.

The debriefing process consists of six steps.

1. Data review by Observer
2. Data submission
3. Data review by Debriefers
4. Data correction
5. Interview
6. Written Evaluation

II. Data Review by Observer

Trip Data

Prior to submitting trip data to debriefers all calculations and forms should be double checked for accuracy and legibility. All data must be entered into the WCGOP database and a Trip Error report must be run. Any errors detected must be corrected and any warnings must be double-checked for accuracy.

The following checklist will help to fix mistakes prior to submitting data. This list is not all-inclusive. Refer to the form instructions for each gear type for a detailed listing of how to complete each form.

Trip Form/ Haul Locations:

- Year is recorded as YYYY.
- Fishery Type is circled (LE, OA, EFP).
 - If EFP, name of EFP is written in.
- USCG number recorded for any vessel that has one. If no USCG number, then State Registration Number recorded.
- Pages are numbered.
- Vessel Logbook page number field completed for LE trawlers only. If non-LE trawl vessels maintain a logbook record the number in the trip notes section.
- Landing and Departure dates are recorded as mm/dd.
- Landing and Departure times are recorded in 24-hour notation.
- Hauls/Sets numbered sequentially by retrieval time.
- Fish Ticket and State Agency Code recorded. If there was no fish ticket issued for a trip (no fish delivered) include a note indicating this in the Trip Notes field.
- Latitude and Longitude recorded in degrees, minutes, and 1/100ths of a minute.
- Verify that target strategy codes are valid.

Trip Form / Hauls:

- Check that all OTC's, Volumes, and Densities are recorded to two decimal places.
 - OTC keypunch check is completed.
- Verify that Total Hooks/Pots field is filled in for all fixed gear sets.
 - Total Hooks/Pots keypunch check is completed.
- Gear Performance Codes recorded for all hauls.

Catch Form:

- Haul number is recorded.
- Page is numbered.
- Date is recorded as mm/dd/yy.
- Trip number is recorded.
 - USCG number is recorded for all vessels that have them.
- Catch # column is filled in sequentially.
- Weights, volumes, and densities are recorded to two decimal places at most.
- Volume and Density columns are filled in for any catch category with weight method 2.
- Discard Reason column is filled in only for discard catch categories with no associated species composition sample.
- # Hooks/Pots sampled column filled in on all fixed gear hauls. All catch categories in a given haul

MUST have the same number of sampled Hooks/Pots.

- # Hooks/Pots keypunch check is completed.
- Sample Weight keypunch check is completed.

Species Composition Form:

- Haul number is recorded.
- Page is numbered.
- Date is recorded as mm/dd/yy.
- Trip number is recorded.
- USCG number is recorded for all vessels that have them.
- Catch Category codes match those on the 'Catch Form' and the catch numbers columns on both pages match.
- If Sample Method = 3, then the Basket # column is filled in.
- KP Weight and KP Number fields are completed for every catch category.
- Species common names are fully written out and match the common names that appear in the database.
- Species codes are correct.
- Discard reasons are recorded for all discard species.

Length Frequency Form:

- Haul number is recorded.
- Page is numbered.
- Date is recorded as mm/dd/yy.
- Trip number is recorded.
- USCG number is recorded for all vessels that have them.
- Catch Category codes and Catch #s match those recorded on the 'Catch Form'.
- Species common names are fully written out and match the common names that appear in the database.
- Species codes are correct.
- Key punch checks (length and frequency) are completed by **species**.
- Verify that individuals that are recorded on the Biospecimen form are NOT recorded on the Length Frequency Form also. If any information other than sex and length are collected, record the information only on the Biospecimen Form.

Biospecimen Form:

- Haul number is recorded.
- Page is numbered.
- Date is recorded as mm/dd/yy.
- Trip number is recorded.

- USCG number is recorded for all vessels that have them.
- Catch Category codes and Catch #s match those recorded on the 'Catch Form'.
- Species common names are fully written out and match the common names that appear in the database.
- Species codes are correct.
- Sex column is filled in only if an attempt was made to ascertain the sex of the individual. If no attempt was made, leave the field blank.
- Never record sex for Pacific Halibut.
- Verify that Pacific Halibut Viability Codes are for the appropriate Gear Type.
- Verify that individuals that are recorded on the Biospecimen form are NOT recorded on the Length Frequency Form also. If any information other than sex and length are collected, record the information only on the Biospecimen Form.

Trip Discard Form:

- Page is numbered.
- Trip number is recorded.
- USCG number is recorded for all vessels that have them.
- Date discard occurred recorded as mm/dd.
- Time discard occurred recorded in 24-hour notation.

- Common name of species discarded recorded.

Marine Mammal Sightings and Interactions Form:

- Date, time, and location fields completed.
- Species name recorded.
- Narrative includes key characteristic used to identify the animal.
- Sketch of animal completed.
- Trip Number recorded.
- Federal Groundfish Permit Number recorded (if vessel has one).
- USCG number or State Registration number recorded in Coast Guard document # field.

Seabird Sighting Form:

- Date, time, and location fields completed.
- Species name recorded.
- Narrative includes key characteristic used to identify the bird.
- Trip Number recorded.
- USCG number or State Registration number recorded in USCG # field.

Tagged Fish Information Form:

- All fields filled in.
- Tag attached to form.

- Otolith vial attached to form if otoliths collected.

Observer Logbook

- Make sure that all required sections of the logbook are completely filled out. These include but are not limited to:
 - Name and trip limit period dates (including year) clearly noted on logbook cover.
 - Descriptions of all OTC and Catch Category weight methods utilized documented for each vessel covered. Include details of how random sampling techniques were implemented.
 - Vessel Diagrams completed for all vessels covered. Any calculations double-checked for accuracy.

III. Data Submission

In general, data collected by Observers are sent to their debriefers. However, several items are always shipped to the Newport Office. Specifics on where to send each type of data are summarized below.

Item	Ship To
Trip Data	Debriefers
Logbook	Debriefers
Species ID Forms	Debriefers
Otoliths	Debriefers
Salmon Scales	Debriefers
Snouts	Newport Office
Tissue Samples	Newport Office
Coral Samples	Newport Office

Data should be submitted either in person or via FEDEX according to the following schedule:

Trip Data, Species ID Forms, Otoliths and Salmon Scales are due monthly as follows:

Data Collected	Due Date	Data Collected	Due Date
January	February 10th	July	August 10th
February	*March 10th	August	*September 10th
March	April 10th	September	October 10th
April	*May 10th	October	*November 10th
May	June 10th	November	December 10th
June	*July 10th	December	*January 10th

*Logbooks due

Group data **by trip**, with forms arranged in the following order:

1. Trip Form(s)

2. Haul data - hauls in sequential order with each haul's forms arranged in the following order:
 - a. Catch Form(s)
 - b. Species Composition Form(s)
 - c. Length Frequency Form(s)
 - d. Biospecimen Form(s)
3. Trip Discard Form(s)
4. Marine Mammal Sighting, Tagged Fish, and/or Seabird Sighting Form(s)

Salmon Scales

- Attach scale envelopes to the associated trip data with paper clips.

Otolith Vials

- Bundle and clearly label (with trip # and haul #) all otolith vials for trips being sent. Otoliths should be grouped by trip and, if more than 10 specimens have been collected for a single trip, by haul.

Logbooks should be submitted with trip data at the end of each two-month period (highlighted due dates).

Snouts, tissue samples, and coral specimens should be sent to the Newport Office as soon as possible **after** the debriefing interview is completed. All specimens must be brought to the debriefing interview so that the barcode numbers can be verified but it is the Observer's responsibility to ship the specimens to Newport after the interview.

REMEMBER! Due dates are the dates that data **must be received by** the debriefer, not the day it needs to be sent.

Be sure to keep up with paper work and computer entry. If data are due during the dates of a scheduled trip, you must submit your data prior to leaving port! Debriefers may request that data be sent earlier than in the schedule outlined above. Instances where this might occur include:

New Observers requested to submit data after their first couple of trips to allow for an early evaluation of sampling procedures.

Observers leaving the program so that a debriefing can be conducted prior to the contract end date.

IV. Data Review By Debriefers

When trip data is received, the debriefer double checks all calculations and verifies that barcode numbers on the paper forms match those on the otolith vials and scale envelopes submitted. All data forms with errors are flagged. The trips containing errors and a list detailing what needs to be corrected are returned to the Observer. .

Debriefers review the observer logbooks bimonthly. The logbook allows debriefers to become familiar with the sampling methods employed on the vessels covered prior to the interview.

V. Data Correction

When data is returned with a list of errors the Observer must make corrections to both the paper forms and the database! Always be sure to carry corrections through all forms and rerun Trip Error Report after updating the database.

VI. Interview

Once all required materials have been received and reviewed, the debriefer will arrange a meeting time with the

Observer. The debriefing interview is a vital part of the Observer's job. It allows the WCGOP to get feedback from the Observer and provides an opportunity for Observers to discuss sampling methods and ask for suggestions if problems were encountered. The interview is the Observer's chance to demonstrate their understanding of the methods learned in training and their proficiency at applying them in the field. It is also an opportunity to give personal insights to WCGOP personnel about potential improvements to the program.

Any mistakes that have not been corrected prior to the debriefing interview must be corrected at that time. Both the paper and electronic copies of the data need to be corrected.

VII. Evaluation

Observers receive an evaluation for each debriefing. Evaluations are broken down into eight categories. Each category covers different portions of the observer's job and has specific criteria that are considered.

Category 1: Sampling Procedures

Criteria A: Proper sampling procedures employed

Criteria B: Random sampling implemented and documented

Category 2: Data Forms

Criteria A: Forms are complete

Criteria B: Forms are legible

Criteria C: Forms are organized

Criteria D: Forms are relatively error free

Criteria E: Data documentation is consistent

Criteria F: Fish ticket numbers are present

Criteria G: Vessel logbook numbers are present

Criteria H: Data entry acceptable

Category 3: Sample Size

Criteria A: Sample size meets program requirements

Category 4: Calculations

Criteria A: Calculations are written out

Criteria B: Calculations are correct

Criteria C: Formulas are written out

Criteria D: Formulas are correct

Category 5: Species Identification

Criteria A: Species ID forms are legible and neat

Criteria B: Species ID forms are completed for all
new species seen

Category 6: Observer Logbook

Criteria A: All sections are completed

Criteria B: Vessel safety checks are mailed to
coordinator prior to first trip

Criteria C: Scale calibration is completed according
to protocol

Criteria D: Notes and descriptions are detailed

Category 7: Attitude/Reliability/Flexibility

Criteria A: Trips are not missed

Criteria B: Observer maintains professionalism with
coordinator, debriefer, lead Observer, and
other Observers

Criteria C: Observer interacts well with the fleet

Criteria D: Observer readily accepts assignments and
tasks

Criteria E: Observer completes shore duties in a
timely manner

Category 8: Communication

Criteria A: Calls from coordinator, debriefer, lead
Observer, and other Observers are
made/returned promptly and
professionally

Criteria B: Calls to or from vessels are made /

returned promptly and professionally

Criteria C: Calls to “Observer Trip Notification

Phone System” are made promptly

Criteria D: Activity is completed promptly

The evaluation will include written comments on each category. Although there are no numerical scores associated with the evaluation, each category’s comments will include notes on both **Accomplishments** (areas in which the Observer met or exceeded program expectations) and **Areas for Improvement** (areas in which program expectations were not met – this may be left blank if all expectations were met or exceeded). If there are serious problems with data quality or if there are aspects of the job that are repeatedly noted as ‘Areas for Improvement’ the evaluation may include **Tasks** or **Requirements**.

Tasks are additional duties the Observer must complete prior to their next debriefing. Examples of Tasks include re-reading a specific chapter of the manual to improve understanding of sampling protocols or a stringent guideline requiring the completion of a duty neglected in previous periods (e.g. Species ID forms must be completed for all new species encountered). If a Task is not completed by the time of the next evaluation it will be noted as a Requirement.

Requirements are duties the Observer must complete or disciplinary action will be taken. In addition to unfulfilled Tasks, problems that severely affect an Observer’s ability to adequately perform their job may be listed as Requirements. Examples of such items include an Observer’s refusing to follow proper sampling protocol or significant problems with communication and/or attitude. Any time a Requirement is listed the following items will also be documented:

1. Consequences if Requirement is not satisfactorily met.
2. Timeline in which Requirement must be met.

A mid-cruise debriefing must be done within a month of any evaluation containing a requirement.

Normally Observers will be presented with a draft evaluation at the time of the debriefing interview. During the interview Observers may make clarifications that could potentially lead to modifications of the draft evaluation. A final evaluation will be made available on the database after the interview is completed. Observers are required to read and sign off on evaluations in the WCGOP database. The evaluation may be edited until the Observer signs off on it. If an Observer feels that their evaluation does not fairly represent the job they have done they may contact their debriefer directly or, if they are uncomfortable doing that, may contact the Lead Debriefing or the Program Lead to moderate a discussion. By signing an evaluation, the Observer simply verifies that they have seen it regardless of whether they agree with its contents. AOI will monitor the status of evaluations and will contact Observers who have not signed off on recent evaluations.